

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently Amended) A medicine prototype support system for an ingredient manufacturer developing medical product at a request of a product manufacturer comprising:

a database comprising confidential first main ingredient information and corresponding second main ingredient information, the first confidential main ingredient information being confidential information of the product manufacturer;

information conversion means for selecting a second main ingredient ~~by comparing~~ having properties of the sufficiently similar to the confidential main ingredient to permit substitution thereof when making a prototype similar to a prototype using the first main ingredient, but without using or revealing the first main ingredient stored in the database with properties of a plurality of potential second main ingredients stored in the database;

composition ingredient determination means for selecting a composition ingredient based on the properties of the first and second main ingredients; and

communication means for receiving confidential first main ingredient information from a product manufacturer and for transmitting selected second main ingredient information and composition ingredient information to a composition manufacturer system, wherein

the medicine prototype support system does not reveal the identity of the confidential first main ingredient to the composition manufacturer system.

7-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A medicine prototype support system for an ingredient manufacturer developing medical product at a request of a product manufacturer comprising:

a database including first main ingredient information and second main ingredient information;

information conversion software that selects a second main ingredient ~~by comparing~~ having properties of the sufficiently similar to the confidential main ingredient to permit substitution thereof when making a prototype similar to a prototype using the first main ingredient, but without using or revealing the first main ingredient stored in the database with properties of a plurality of potential second main ingredients stored in the database;

composition ingredient determination software that selects a composition ingredient based on the properties of the first and second main ingredients; and

a server for transmitting second main ingredient information and composition ingredient information to a composition manufacturer system, wherein

the first main ingredient information is confidential information of the product manufacturer, the second main ingredient information is non-confidential, and the medicine prototype support system does not reveal the identity of the confidential first main ingredient to the composition manufacturer system.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of requesting prototype manufacture from a composition manufacturer comprising the steps of:

- receiving a request from a product manufacturer, the request including first main ingredient information that is confidential information of the product manufacturer;
- storing the confidential first main ingredient information;
- selecting a second main ingredient ~~by comparing~~ having properties of the sufficiently similar to the confidential main ingredient to permit substitution thereof when making a prototype similar to a prototype using the first main ingredient, but without using or revealing the first main ingredient stored in the database with properties of a plurality of potential second main ingredients stored in the database;
- determining a composition ingredient based on the confidential main ingredient information and second main ingredient information;
- transmitting a request for prototype manufacture to the composition manufacturer, the request for prototype manufacture including the identities of the selected second main ingredient and the selected composition ingredient; and
- maintaining the confidentiality of the first main ingredient information by not transmitting it to the composition manufacturer.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising transmitting a second request for prototype manufacture to a second composition manufacturer.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the confidential main ingredient information received from the product manufacturer includes the identity of the main ingredient.

13. (New) A medicine prototype support system for an ingredient manufacturer developing medical product at a request of a product manufacturer comprising:

a database comprising confidential first main ingredient information and corresponding second main ingredient information, the first confidential main ingredient information being confidential information of the product manufacturer;

information conversion means for selecting a second main ingredient by comparing properties of the confidential main ingredient stored in the database with properties of a plurality of potential second main ingredients stored in the database;

composition ingredient determination means for selecting a composition ingredient based on the properties of the first and second main ingredients; and

communication means for receiving confidential first main ingredient information from a product manufacturer and for transmitting selected second main ingredient information and composition ingredient information to a composition manufacturer system, wherein

the medicine prototype support system does not reveal the identity of the confidential first main ingredient to the composition manufacturer system and

the information conversion means selects the second main ingredient such that it is impossible to estimate the development of the confidential first main ingredient from the second main ingredient..